

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01 L-03 OC-05 CCO-00 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7236

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T NASSAU 1539

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BF

SUBJ: FACILITIES NEGOTIATION

REF: STATE 221052

1. AS PER REFTTEL, I BRIEFED MENNELL ON WASHINGTON'S RESPONSE TO HMG PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTATIONS ON ABOVE SUBJECT. MENNELL WELCOMED FAVORABLE RESPONSE.
2. MENNELL MENTIONED THAT RODNEY BAIN, SECRETARY TO THE CABINET, WAS VACATIONING IN BRITAIN AND HAD ASKED AND RECEIVED HMG AGREEMENT TO BE BRIEFED ON LATEST THINKING RE UK PACKAGE FOR MEETING HMG COMMITMENT TO BAHAMAS, I.E., THE 3.5 MILLION POUND COMMITMENT. MENNELL ANTICIPATED THAT THIS MIGHT RESULT IN CERTAIN READJUSTMENT OF CONTENT OF PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED PACKAGE. IMPLICATION WAS THAT BASED ON SUCH READJUSTMENT, ASSUMING IT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT HERE AND IN LONDON, UK/GCOB NEGOTIATION WOULD BE CLOSE TO COMPLETION.
3. I POINTED OUT TO MENNELL THAT ASIDE FROM GENERAL UTILITY IN HAVING A U.S./U.K. CONSULTATION WE OBVIOUSLY WERE INTERESTED IN CONSIDERING WHETHER COORDINATION IN TIMING OR OTHER ASPECTS

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OF OUR BILATERAL APPROACHES COULD IMPROVE OUR LEVERAGE VIS-A-VIS

GCOB. IN THIS CONNECTION, I REMINDED HIM AGAIN THAT WHILE I WAS HOPEFUL THAT OUR QUID WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO SECURE THE SORT OF AGREEMENT WE WANTED I COULD OFFER NO ASSURANCES ON THAT ACCOUNT AND INDEED WAS CONCERNED THAT GCOB MIGHT HAVE EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS CONCERNING VALUE TO US OF THE BASES. I MENTIONED IN PASSING BY WAY OF EXAMPLE THAT WHILE AUTEC WAS USEFUL TO US IT WAS CLEARLY OF FINITE VALUE AND THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR ASSUMING THAT WE WOULD WISH TO RETAIN IT IF THE PRICE WERE TOO HIGH. I NOTED THAT, GIVEN MENNEL'S PREVIOUS COMMENTS CONCERNING BRITISH INTEREST IN CONTINUING A PARTICIPATION IN AUTEC, THIS WOULD SUGGEST THAT THERE MIGHT BE MERIT IN EXPLORING WHETHER WE COULD GAIN LEVERAGE FROM AN ORCHESTRATED APPROACH.

4. COMMENT: I CONTINUE TO HAVE THE FEELING THAT, AS I PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, MENNEL IS SOMEWHAT MORE GUNG HO FOR WINDING UP AN AGREEMENT THAN LONDON MAY BE. MY CONCERN IS THAT DESPITE LONDON'S INTEREST IN CONSULTATIONS WHICH CARRIED WITH IT TO MY MIND AN IMPLICIT INTEREST IN EXAMINING POTENTIAL LEVERAGE IN AN ORCHESTRATED APPROACH IF MENNEL PUSHES THE U.K./GCOB NEGOTIATION ESSENTIALLY TO COMPLETION THERE MAY BE LITTLE OR NO LATITUDE LEFT FOR ASSERTION OF SUCH LEVERAGE. SHOULD THAT PROVE TO BE THE CASE THE UTILITY IN HOLDING CONSULTATIONS WITH THE BRITISH, WHILE IT WOULD STILL EXIST, WOULD TO MY MIND BE REDUCED. IN APPROACHING THE U.K. EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT DEPARTMENT TOUCH AT LEAST LIGHTLY ON THIS THEME SO THAT INSOFAR AS PRACTICAL THE COMPLETION OF THE U.K./GCOB NEGOTIATION IS SLOWED.

5. BY WAY OF INFORMATION, MENNEL ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE U.K. COMMUNICATIONS RELAY FACILITY WOULD BE CLOSED DOWN AS OF SEPTEMBER 30. IN THIS CONNECTION, LONDON HAS AUTHORIZED HIM TO TURN OVER THE FACILITY, AFTER REMOVAL OF MOST OF THE EQUIPMENT, TO THE GCOB. IN ADDITION TO STRUCTURE AND ANTENNAS, U.K. WOULD LEAVE A MORSE TRANSMITTING AND RECEIVING CAPABILITY WHICH, ACCORDING TO MENNEL, WOULD PERMIT DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH INTERPOL AND FBI. HMG WOULD PROBABLY OFFER TO TRAIN A LIMITED NUMBER OF BAHAMIANS IN OPERATION OF THE FACILITY. ESTIMATED VALUE OF WHAT WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO GCOB WAS PLACED BY MENNEL AT ONE-QUARTER MILLION POUNDS. MENNEL ALSO SAID THAT HMG

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MOTIVES WERE A) THAT IT WOULD BE MORE COSTLY THAN IT WAS WORTH TO TRANSPORT ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT ON THE SITE, IT WOULD ALSO REQUIRE DESTRUCTION OF ANTENNAS, PERHAPS REPLACEMENT OF LAND AREAS TO ORIGINAL FORM, ETC., AND B) MAINTENANCE OF STANDBY FACILITY WOULD LEND ITSELF TO REINSERTION OF EITHER U.K. OR U.S. COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES IN AN EMERGENCY.

6. THE OFFER TO TURN OVER THE COMMUNICATIONS RELAY STATION

IS BEING MADE ENTIRELY OUTSIDE OF THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATION,
IN PART BECAUSE OF REASONS OF TIMING AND IN PART FOR REASONS
SET FORTH IN PARA 5 ABOVE.
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